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NIC 03580-84

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

20 June 1984

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Fred Ikle
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

SUBJECT: The Idea of an Open World

1. As I understand your question, you are posing the problem of considering (1) whether a wholly open world -- free, that is, from security strictures on observing Soviet-US military/space/technological developments -- is a totally impossible idea; (2) what the pro's and con's of such a regime might be; and (3) what steps the US might take to move in that direction. The quick-and-dirty view of some of us here at the National Intelligence Council, in brief, is that on balance such a regime could involve significant advantage, but that objections to the idea will surely be raised by the Soviet government and perhaps also by elements of the American public.

2. The intriguing question of an open world is of course not wholly without precedent; there is at least some similarity in the Baruch Plan, Ike's Open Skies, and more recent moves concerning the possible monitoring of chemical weapons progress. Central to any question of proposing Open World, of course, is the US intent. For the purposes of this memorandum, we will assume that that interest is not just propagandistic -- that is, to propose moves we expect the Soviets will veto -- but a rather genuine effort to construct a more secure environment.

3. What is meant by Open World? For the purposes of this paper we define this not as opening up all secrets to outer gaze, but as a mutual readiness to permit reasonably full and effective on-site (or whatever) inspection of each other's status/progress concerning nuclear weapons and their deployment, BW, CW, space vehicles, space warfare, and directed energy -- anything, that is, that in terms of threats to national security goes beyond prevailing definitions of general purpose forces.

4. Advantages of an open world, were it to be realized or neared:

- Significant savings in national treasure, priorities, talent, and attentions.
- The ability to redirect some of those monetary and talent savings to other pressing national and international needs.

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- Much more confidence in security planning and policymaking because of the lessening of uncertainty on many key issues.
- A certain lessening of intense international suspicions, as a more open world reduces the credibility of worst-case assumptions and planning.
- A consequent greater opportunity for the two superpowers to pursue parallel interests on certain questions of common concern: e.g., world climatology, resources, and pollution; nuclear proliferation; and control of certain Third World crises.
- By superpower initiative and precedent, a greater leverage on extreme or irresponsible leaderships in the world to follow suit and by doing so to better abide by international norms.
- The US would gain more knowledge of Soviet capabilities than the Soviets would gain about us, since in an open world their society would change more radically than would ours.

5. Disadvantages of an open world:

- The risk that the USSR would not live up to its mutual obligations, and through various means would seek to exploit the situation to achieve Soviet world advantage.
- The lack of feasible US or world enforcement measures, should such situation develop.
- Adverse effects of gross disillusionment/backlash among US and other publics, should the Soviets so renege.
- Even if the US and the USSR honored the agreement, it is possible that other major powers would not, [redacted] in particular, and would seek to turn Open World to their advantage.
- Even if reached and reasonably honored, Open World would not in itself change Soviet global ambitions, or reduce the USSR's military weight in Europe, or mitigate myriads of instabilities in the Third World.
- Open World would remain an extremely fragile phenomenon, prey to new suspicions and tempers growing out of other world problems.
- Not least, reaching a meaningful Open World arrangement inevitably would involve some opening up of America, in fact a certain diminution of US sovereignty. This, in turn, would make an Open World package a very difficult product to sell to the American public and Congress, even if a US Administration desired it strongly. Recalling the caveats US officials had to insert in the UN Charter and in SALTs I and II, it is easy to imagine that Open

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World would quickly become a sharp and divisive issue in American politics, obscuring its true issues and potentials.

6. On balance, advantages of open world would seem clearly to outweigh its disadvantages, and were it to eventuate it could serve as a major first step to a more secure world. But in practical terms the chances of reaching a meaningful open world arrangement seem heavily adverse.

- The prime hazard is Soviet suspicion -- the deeply rooted, overriding suspicion that has marked the Russian state for centuries. It is difficult to foresee how the Kremlin's leaders could make the enormous leap from this mind-set to what Open World would require of Soviet practice. It is also difficult to foresee how these leaders could think they could rig such an arrangement to Soviet advantage.
- The basic causes of the Cold War are political, and any major improvement will have to begin there. In other words, Open World will more likely be the result of lessened suspicions, than the cause.



Herbert E. Meyer
Vice Chairman

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